

Project Information

Company: Sparklight

Project Description

General Info

Project Name: Cotton Valley/Plain Dealing/Sarepta FTTP Broadband Deployment

Total Project Cost: 8,815,000.00

Total project cost per prospective broadband recipient: 3,598.00

Infrastructure cost per prospective broadband recipient: 3,418.00

Number of households to be served: 2406

Number of businesses to be served: 50

GUMBO cost per prospective broadband recipient: 2,051.00

Number of GUMBO households to be served: 2406

Number of GUMBO businesses to be served: 50

General Location/Parishes: Bossier
Webster

Base Speed (Minimum Download/Upload): 25/25 Mbps

Supported Scalability Speeds (Minimum Download/Upload): 5/5 Gbps

Qualifications and Experience:

Provide the following details:

- Number of years the applicant has provided internet services;
- A history of the number of households and consumers, by year of service, to which the applicant has provided broadband internet access, as well as the current number of households to which broadband internet access (at least 25:3 Mbps) is offered;
- The number of completed internet service infrastructure projects funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal;
- Whether the applicant has ever participated in an internet service infrastructure project funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, and if so, for each project, the nature and impact of the project, the role of the applicant, the total cost of the project, and the dollar amount of federal or state grant funding;
- The number of penalties paid by the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant, relative to internet service infrastructure projects funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal; and
- The number of times the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant has ever been a defendant in any federal or state criminal proceeding or civil litigation as a result of its participation in an internet service infrastructure project funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal

Sparklight has been providing broadband to households and businesses for over 20 years. A 5 year history of customers is attached, however, in 2021 Sparklight achieved the milestone of over 1 Million broadband customers in 24 states including Louisiana. Sparklight has completed two projects, one in AR and one in AZ. More detail can be found in the attached. the outcomes of those projects are also included. Sparklight has not had any penalties associated with state or federal grants nor has Sparklight been a defendant in criminal or civil litigations as a result in broadband projects.

Financial Background:

- Provide five years of financial statements, pro forma statements, or financial audits to ensure financial and organizational strength regarding the ability of the applicant to successfully meet the terms of the grant requirements and the ability to meet the potential repayment of grant funds. If the applicant has been in business for less than five years, provide documentation for the number of years in business
- Indicate whether the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant has ever filed for bankruptcy

Attached are 5 years of audited financial documents.

Partnerships:

Provide the identity of any partners or affiliates if the applicant is proposing a project for which the applicant affirms that a formalized agreement or letter of support exists between the provider and one or more unaffiliated partners where the partner is one of the following:

- a separate private provider of broadband service, requiring a formalized agreement; or
- a nonprofit or not-for-profit, or a for-profit subsidiary of either, and the applicant is:
 - being allowed access and use of the partner's infrastructure, on special terms and conditions designed to facilitate the provision of broadband services in unserved areas, requiring a formalized agreement;
 - utilizing a matching financial and/or in-kind contribution provided by one or more partners, requiring a formalized agreement; or
 - a parish, municipality, or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, may qualify as a nonprofit for the purposes of the GUMBO grant program. Letters of support by a parish, municipality, or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, supporting an application may be submitted as part of an application. A letter of support does not require a formalized agreement.
- Provide a brief narrative explaining how the partnership or affiliation will facilitate deployment and reduce cost per prospective broadband recipient. For applications or project areas where the nonprofit or not-for-profit partner provides only matching financial support, that information can be documented in the budget section within the relevant application or project area.

Sparklight has no partners associated with this broadband project.

For work being performed by Hudson Initiative or Veterans Initiative qualified applicants or contractors, provide documentation and/or a formalized agreement.

To Sparklight's knowledge, its contractors are not part of the Hudson or Veterans Initiatives.

Project Area

Assessment of the Current Level of Broadband Access in the Proposed Deployment Area

Describe the current level of service within the area and provide the data source or methodology used to capture this information. Raw data may be submitted as part of the assessment. If data is available to support differences between advertised and transmission speeds, applicants may also submit applications for areas where transmission speeds are less than 25:3 Mbps.

Current levels of broadband are inconsistent and not as reliable as fiber. Most of these areas are served by fixed broadband over copper. Maps from the FCC Broadband Website can be found in the submission document on page 10.

Services

Provide a description of service options to be provided:

Service Name	Upload/download speed	Date of 1st Availability	Data Cap	# of recipients	Price
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Marketing

Provide documentation for applicant engagement to connect consumers with community education forums, multimedia advertising, and marketing programs.

Services and Marketing can be found on page 21 through page 23 in the submission document.

Adoption

Provide documentation that shows low-income household service offerings, digital equity or literacy support, or programs or partnerships to provide these services. The applicant should also indicate current participation in, or plans to, accept the federal Lifeline subsidy.

Adoption is primarily a function of affordability either for devices and/or subscription services. Sparklight has entry level pricing for symmetrical speeds and also participates in programs like EBB for example.

Community Support

Evidence of support for the project from citizens, local government, businesses, and institutions in the community, including letters of correspondence from citizens, local government, businesses, and institutions in the community that supports the project

Unfortunately, Sparklight was unable to gather Letters of Support from Community leaders.

Local Workforce

Documentation of a workforce plan prioritizing the hiring of local, Louisiana resident workers, to include a signed letter of intent with a post-secondary educational institution that is a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, containing an obligation upon the applicant, and contractors or subcontractors of the applicant, to put forth a good-faith effort to hire, when possible, recent graduates of broadband-related programs.

Sparklight draws most of its workforce from the surround community. Indeed a applicant pool from a post secondary educational institution would be ideal. While there was an interest shown, no actual letter of intent was signed.

Technical Report

Reporting Requirements

Explain in technical detail the technologies to be used in the proposed project and the broadband transmission speeds offered to prospective broadband recipients as a result of the project. If it would be impracticable, because of geography, topography, or excessive cost to design a broadband infrastructure project that would deliver 100:100 Mbps, the applicant must provide an explanation. Transmission speeds of 100:20 Mbps are the minimum allowable under this grant program.

Sparklight will be deploying an ePON architecture. Information can be found in Section 311 Paragraph A.1 on Page 14 through page 18 on the Final Submission file. Speeds for Households will be tiered services with the maximum throughput of 1 Gbps symmetrical. For businesses, speeds Sparklight offers speeds of 5 Gbps symmetrical.

Explain the scalability of the broadband infrastructure to be deployed to meet future bandwidth needs.

With the OLT equipment being deployed, the capability could be up to 10 Gbps symmetrical should the communities require it. To move from 1Gbps to 5 or 10 Gbps it would be a modem change out. Data sheets of our equipment is attached.

Provide a proposed construction timeline and duration of the deployment project period. The deployment project period is the time from award of the grant agreement to the time that service is available to the targeted prospective broadband recipients under the grant. Describe estimated timeline, deployment roll-out and number of end-users to be served in each phase (10 percent, 35 percent, 60 percent, 85 percent, 100 percent).

A timeline chart is on Page 15 of the final Submission file. From the time the Grant is awarded and it is executed, Sparklight commits to completing the project in 18 months.

☒ **Wired Infrastructure** ☐ **Fixed Wireless**

Wired Infrastructure Deployment Reporting Requirements

Describe the general design of the project and deployment plan and include the following:

- Explanation of the existing networks and equipment to be used for the project. If assets are owned by another entity, explain how they will be used for this project and, if applicable, provide a copy of the agreement between the applicant and the owner.
- Total number of miles of project infrastructure deployment, and the number of miles of project infrastructure deployment accounted for by preexisting infrastructure
- Detailed explanation of how the new or upgraded infrastructure will serve the prospective broadband recipients. In the case of the installation or upgrade of a specific site infrastructure, such as a point of presence or fiber hut (fiber), pedestal (cable), or a remote exchange/DSLAM (DSL), the applicant must include:
 - The number of prospective broadband recipients that will be served by that site infrastructure

- The distance from the specific site infrastructure such as a POP, pedestal, or DSLAM to the end user(s) and the expected broadband speed that will be effectively delivered
- Detailed description of the design work needed for deployment, such as, but not limited to, pole work, acquiring or updating easements, and/or property acquisition.

This information is contained on Pages 14 through 16 on the Final Submission file. this includes network architecture, average miles. Expected speeds is found in the Proposed service section 315 found on page 20.

Wired Assets

Existing Network	Existing Equipment	New/Upgraded Infrastructure	Installation Type	Num of Recipients	Avg Distance in Miles Between Prospective Recipients	Expected Speed
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Budget

Budget

The project budget should reflect all eligible project costs to be funded through the GUMBO Grant Program. Additionally, the project budget should include the minimum provider funding match of at least 20%, any local government funding match from a parish, municipality, and/or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, and the requested GUMBO Grant Program funding.

A budget can be found in Section 313 Paragraph B.1 on Page 19 through 20 on the Final Submission file.

Proof of Funding Availability

Provide a signed letter of funding availability from each source of funds committed for the project. If loan or other grant funds are pledged, a loan/grant commitment letter from each source of funds must be included. Should an applicant be an awardee of Universal Service, Connect American Phase II, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, or other federal or non-federal funds for the deployment of broadband service, the applicant shall attest as to whether or not the applicant's GUMBO application and associated project's buildout is dependent upon such awarded funds.

Sparklight's Resolution of Offeror can be found on Page 21 in the Final Submission file